MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION

CYCLE SAFETY INFO

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STATE MOTORCYCLE OPERATOR LICENSING—1980

Beginning in 1974 the Motorcycle Safety Foundation has annually prepared a listing of state procedures for licensing motorcycle operators. This is the fourth in a series of *Cycle Safety Info* sheets reporting those practices.

As in the past, a detailed questionnaire was sent to the licensing authorities of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The questionnaire requested information on motorcycle operator license applicant requirements. In 1979 the questionnaire requested additional statistical information about the number of licensed motorcycle and other vehicle operators. That information is included in the table in the adjoining column.

Summary of State Licensing Procedures

- 44 states require a special motorcycle license or endorsement for *all* individuals.
- 38 states issue a motorcycle operator learner's permit which allows on-street operation with restrictions.
- 17 states make it mandatory that first-time motorcycle operators obtain a learner's permit. The time period is from 30 days to 2 years.
- 24 states allow individuals to get a motorcycle license at an earlier age if they have completed automobile driver education. Minimum ages range from 14 to 17.
- 5 states require motorcycle safety education as a prerequisite to licensing.
- 44 states have a special knowledge test for motorcycle operators.
- 39 states administer some form of an off-road skill test.
- 25 states administer an in-traffic motorcycle operator skill test.
- 44 states inspect the motorcycle or check for a valid inspection sticker as part of the licensing process.
- 38 states check to see that the applicant's helmet and eye protection meet state standards.
- 31 states require some form of re-examination. 20 of those states require re-examination every 4 years.
  - 31 check vision
  - 11 administer a knowledge test
  - 4 give an off-street test
  - 2 give an in-traffic test

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation is a national, private, nonprofit organization whose goal is the reduction of motorcycle accidents and injuries. This is accomplished through the development and implementation of motorcycle rider education and licensing improvement programs, and through research and public information programs focused on motorcyclist and motorist operations. MSF is sponsored by the five leading motorcycle manufacturers: Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Harley-Davidson.

STATE:	REPORTED MOTORCYCLE LICENSE ENDORSEMENTS	MOTORCYCLE OPERATORS LICENSED IN 1979[1]	TOTAL NUMBER MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR LICENSES	TOTAL NUMBER STATE LICENSE EXAMINERS	TOTAL NUMBER OF EXAM SITES INCLUDING PART-TIME SITES	MOTORCYCLE QUESTIONS INCLUDED ON AUTOMOBILE DRIVER LICENSE KNOWLEDGE TESTS
Alabama	NO MOTORCYCLE TEST		1,195,365	90	76	NO
Alaska	N/A	N/A	N/A	25	34	NO
Arizona	35,898	N/A	500,182	105	39	NO
Arkansas	43,925	29,148	1,450,000	31	133	NO
California	789,936	234,246	15,191,625	420	210	YES
Colorado	122,319	25,518	1,996,420	150	75	YES
Connecticut	124,670	8,327	2,093,018	70	15	NO
Delaware	23,919	3,480	413,447	8	4	YES
D.C.	7,105	2,406	556,154	8	1	YES
Florida	NO MOTORCYCLE TEST		7,148,084	N/A	N/A	NO
Georgia	N/A	N/A	3,311,000	129	55	NO
Hawaii	N/A	17,843	N/A	9	5	NO
Idaho	NO MOTORCYCLE TEST		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Illinois	378,950	N/A	6,854,515	560	122	YES
Indiana	NO MOTORCYCLE TEST		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Iowa	233,994	16,500	N/A	36	138	YES
Kansas	249,118	N/A	1,990,066	149	105	NO
Kentucky	31,837	N/A	2,493,751	87	120	NO
Louisiana	86,256	8,621	2,800,000	256	123	NO
Maine	N/A	N/A	N/A	36	27	NO
Maryland	123,173	13,108	2,531,172	102	19	NO
Massachusetts	185,043	N/A	3,605,300	200	35	NO
Michigan	417,235	N/A	6,662,752	1,200[2]	235	YES
Minnesota	184,545	17,480	2,696,620	91	101	YES
Mississippi	NO MOTORCYCLE TEST		1,500,000	34	81	NO
Missouri	185,650	N/A	3,225,925	147	126	NO
Montana	16,426	N/A	578,856	21	56	NO
Nebraska	66,454	N/A	1,200,000	55	95	NO
Nevada	N/A	N/A	N/A	34	36	NO
New Hampshire	69,128	8,145	630,725	27	21	NO
New Jersey	168,994	N/A	4,687,429	240	20	NO
New Mexico	51,561	N/A	910,177	72	72	NO
New York	313,230	N/A	9,125,934	155	122	NO
North Carolina	35,482	20,182	3,599,341	265	188	NO
North Dakota	23,000	1,700	444,262	95	65	NO
Ohio	445,602	N/A	6,811,522	160	93	NO
Oklahoma	N/A	N/A	N/A	54	126	NO
Oregon	170,700	10,700	1,900,000	150	65	YES
Pennsylvania	378,973	N/A	8,079,408	144	77	NO
Rhode Island	N/A	N/A	770,000	8	5	NO
South Carolina	35,056	6,718	1,783,313	118	52	NO
South Dakota	N/A	N/A	N/A	52	88	NO
Tennessee	153,718	N/A	2,696,652	78	101	YES
Texas	487,501	64,973	9,064,917	343	340	NO
Utah	133,957	N/A	850,000	55	44	YES
Vermont	33,204	3,300	335,911	13	16	NO
Virginia	165,019	N/A	3,413,405	142	126	NO
Washington	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58	NO
West Virginia	NO MOTORCYCLE TEST		1,422,974	N/A	N/A	NO
Wisconsin	201,502	17,226	2,927,546	176	111	YES
Wyoming	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R

N/A—Responded but data not available.
N/R—Information not received by print deadline.
NO MOTORCYCLE TEST—State does not have special license for motorcycle operators.
[1] Some states reported on other than standard calendar year.
[2] All branch office employees authorized to administer skill tests.

STATE MOTORCYCLE OPERATOR LICENSING PROCEDURES

1980

STATE	SPECIAL LICENSE OR ENDORSEMENT	LEARNER'S PERMIT	DURATION OF LICENSE	MINIMUM AGE WITH DRIVER EDUCATION	MINIMUM AGE WITHOUT DRIVER EDUCATION	MOTORCYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION A PREREQUISITE TO LICENSING	MOTORCYCLE KNOWLEDGE TEST	OFF-ROAD SKILL TEST	IN-TRAFFIC SKILL TEST	CYCLE INSPECTED	RIDER GEAR INSPECTED	RE-EXAMINATION REQUIRED	Re-examined for: Vision	Re-examined for: Knowledge	Re-examined for: Off-Street	Re-examined for: In-Traffic
Alabama					14-16[30]											
Arizona	•	•[7]	3	16	16		•	•		•	•[34]	3	•	•	•[11]	
Arkansas	•	•[3]	2/4	14[12]	16		•	•		•	•					
Colorado	•	•[6]	4	16	16[14]		•	•[15]		•	•[34]	3	•			
Connecticut	•	◉[3]	4	16	18		•	•	•	•	•[34]					
D.C.	•	◉[3]	4		16[46]		•		•	•	•	4	•			
Florida					15[16]			•[16]	•[16]	•[16]	•[16]	•	•	•		
Hawaii	•	◉[4]	2/4	15	15		•	•	•	•	•[21]	2/4	•	•		
Idaho				14	16											
Indiana	•[44]			16 yr. 1 mo.	16 yr. 6 mo.				•[18]	•[24]		4	•			
Iowa	•		2/4	16	18		•	•	•[18]	•		2/4	•			
Kentucky	•	◉[3]	2	16	16		•		•[18]	•	•					
Louisiana	•		2/4	15	15		•		•	•		•	•			
Maryland	•	◉[4]	4	16	18		•	•								
Massachusetts	•	◉[7]	4	16½	17		•	•	•	•	•	4	•			
Minnesota	•	•[2]	4	16	18	•[22]	•	•	•	•	•	4	•			
Mississippi		•[3]		15	15					•	•					
Montana	•	•[7]	4	15	16		•	•	•	•	•[20]	4	•			
Nebraska	•	•[9]	4	16	16		•		•			4	•	•		•
New Hampshire	•	◉[1]	4	16	18		•[41]	•		•	•	4	•			
New Jersey	•	◉[4]	2	17	17		•	•	•	•	•	•	•[45]			
New York	•	◉[9]	4		16[28]		•	•[19]	•	•	•	4	•			
North Carolina	•[17]		4	16	18		•	•		•	•	4	•	•[42]	•[42]	
Ohio	•	◉[7]	4	16	18		•	•		•	•					
Oklahoma					14[38]		•[25]		•[25]	•[25]	•[25]					
Pennsylvania	•	◉[5]	2		16		•	•		•	•					
Rhode Island	•	◉[4]	2	16	18	•[37]	•	•		•		4	•			
South Dakota	•		4		14		•	•	•			•[40]	•	•	•	•
Tennessee	•		2	16	16[30]		•	•	•	•	•					
Utah	•	◉[3]	4	16[31]			•	•	•			•	•	•		
Vermont	•		2	16	18		•	•		•	•					
Washington	•	•[9]	2	16	18		•	•		•	•	•	•			
West Virginia				16	16					•[18]						
Wyoming	•	•[9]	3		16		•	•		•	•	3	•	•	•[11]	

◉ Mandatory Learner's Permit Required

1 Maximum 30 days.
2 Maximum 45 days.
3 Maximum 60 days.
4 Maximum 90 days.
5 Maximum 120 days.
6 Maximum 150 days.
7 Maximum 6 months.
8 Maximum 8 months.
9 Maximum 1 year.
10 Maximum 2 years.
11 At the examiner's discretion.
12 Age 14-16 restricted to 250cc or less with parental consent.
13 Under 16 restricted to 200cc or less effective 1/1/80.
14 Learner's permit issued at age 15½ if enrolled in approved course.
15 Off-street except when facility not available.
16 Age 15 restricted to cycle of 5 brake horsepower-knowledge test only.
17 Required for operating 190cc or larger.
18 "Motorcycle only" license applicants.
19 Provided only at select sites.
20 Only helmet inspected.
21 Helmet inspected for applicants under age 18.
22 Under age 18.
23 Age 18 and under effective 1/1/81.
24 Once a year for "motorcycle only" applicants.
25 Required for age 14-15 and "motorcycle only" applicants.
26 After 40 years of age every third renewal and after 65 years of age every 2 years.
27 Under age 16 effective 1/1/80.
28 Class 8 (16-18) motorcycle license or permit not valid in New York City; Nassau County has special restrictions.
29 Operators 69 years of age or older required to pass complete examination every 3 years.
30 Age 14-16 restricted to 5 brake horsepower or less.
31 Driver education required regardless of age.
32 Under age 17.
33 Age 15 restricted to 100cc or less.
34 Only eye protection inspected.
35 Age 16-17 restricted to less than 150cc.
36 Age 14-15 restricted license to and from work and school.
37 Required of all first-time applicants regardless of age.
38 Age 14-15 restricted to 125cc or less.
39 Age 13-15 restricted to under 100cc.
40 For moving violation only.
41 Effective 4/1/80.
42 Knowledge and skill test if driving record warrants.
43 Only after license expires over 60 days or reinstatement after point revocation.
44 Endorsement required effective 1981.
45 Examination every 10 years.
46 Age 16 with parental consent notarized.

This information was assembled by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Licensing and Law Enforcement Department. Licensing authorities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia were directly contacted by MSF for an update on the information listed in this chart.

Although this information was obtained from the most authoritative sources available as of November 1979, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation is not responsible for its accuracy or completeness.

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